

# WELD COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

May 15, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm. Board members present included: Jean Mark, Ron Broda, Ralph Anders, Dennie Kutcher and Chuck Birkemeyer. County Commissioner Steve Moreno was present. Board members Cami Hillman and Lynette DeWolf, and Public Works Deputy Director Curtis Hall were absent. Supervisor Tina Booton was also present.

Introductions were carried out. Ralph moved, and Chuck seconded the approval of the May minutes.

## Old Business

I. 2019 Weed Division Program:

### **Events**

Jan. 29-31: Farm Show: manned booth

Feb. 20-22: From Our Lands to Your Hands: Weed info hands-on. Approx. 500 youth participated

April 11: Weed presentation to Aims Ag Department. 8 students and teacher.

April 24: Children's Water Festival - Approx. 150 students

May 4: Frederick DYI – booth to ID weeds, chemical options and sprayer calibration. 5 youth and 5 adults

June 8: Northern Water's – Conservation Gardens Fair

June 10: Coal Bank Dam Inspection

June 20: Weed Tour hosted by CSU

July 23 – 28: Weld County 4-H Fair – Weed arrangements – July 24, Wednesday 1 pm judging

Aug. 12-15: Purple Loosestrife week

### **Facebook Posts and Other Outreach:**

Facebook: 38 posts planned on weeds and general plants.

### **Spraying**

2 returning seasonal and 2 new seasonal staff.

Bare-ground Acres: 43.75 last fall: 43.45 this spring; Total: 87.2 acres

Handgun Acres: 16.315 acres – targeting hoary cress

Forest Service Acres: 29.95 acres or 391 gallons – hoary cress

Truck treatments will start over the next 2 weeks.

### **Special Spray Projects.**

Agricultural Research Services, USDA

CDOT – Hwy 85 north of Nunn, Hwy 392 and a small portion of Business Hwy 34

Towns – Severance, Milliken, Fort Lupton, Dacono and Erie

### **Landowner Specialists**

Field Contacts: 734 (checking on properties, looking at complaints, meeting with landowners, etc.)

Office Contacts: 1137 (identifying properties, letters, phone calls, follow-up, records, etc.)

Legal notices: will start going out this month

### **Mower Staff**

1 returning staff and 2 new seasonal staff.

Getting started mowing tomorrow around here – roads by Monday.

### **2017 Cost-Share Grant Status**

Weld County: \$ 10,000.00      Left: \$ 8,650.30

50% up to \$400

Signed-up: 8

Cost-shared with: 4

Spent: \$ 1349.70

West Greeley CD: \$9,090.19

Left: \$ 8490.87

50% up to \$600

Signed-up: 6

Cost-shared with: 3

Spent: \$ 599.32

Dalmatian Toadflax: \$ 20,000.00

Left: \$ 19,300.00

80% up to \$700

Signed-up: 5

Cost-shared with: 1

Spent: \$ 700.00

Diffuse Knapweed: \$ 3200.00

Left: \$ 3200.00

80% up to \$700

Signed-up: 2

Cost-shared with: 0

Spent: \$ 0.00

### **Special Projects –**

**Russian Knapweed Gall Wasps:** released 800 of these darlings on a site in SE Weld County to try and establish a collection site. Success of this agent is questionable.

**Collecting Plant Material:** leaves, small plants and flowers to dry and preserve in “rubber” for use at upcoming educational opportunities.

**Pictures of all plants:** for our library to use in educational pieces.

**Grass Seed Drill:** Will ID locations this spring/summer that need attention and plan on seeding them this winter.

**Video Project:** (still hanging on) Targeting: Dalmatian toadflax, Russian knapweed, leafy spurge, hoary cress, Canada thistle and common mullein. Still in the editing phase from 2016/2017. Struggling with making them ADA compliant and having time to work on them as Tina's parents have been busy. Then permission will be needed to post them to the website or YouTube channel.

**USFS Project:** The PNG came up with \$60,000 for us to carry out treatments on their properties over the next 3 years. These funds must cover labor, chemical and repairs to their vehicle. Planning on 1127 hours in 2019; 1045 hours in 2020 and 645 hours in 2021 unless additional funds can be secured using the same seasonal all 3 years. In the process of creating a new 5 year working agreement to lock up these funds and not lose them with changes to the Federal budgets over the next few years. Tina will be bringing it before the Board of County Commissioners once she receives it from the Forest Service.

## II Mapping Update – Collector Demo

Tina indicated that mapping has been converted to Collector. That the group is using I-Pads with large big screens. It is going very well. Staff have access to landownership info in the field with parcel layer and aerial details. When they come in from the field they can sync, and their mapped data will automatically show on the desktop map version.

Tina took a few minutes to demonstrate how simple Collector was to take a point on the tablet as well as sync it. Then she showed the desktop map for ease of loading, seeing the points, identifying landowners and moving the map around. Tina also showed the dashboard that Sam with GIS in IT created for a simple snapshot of how many points each operator has collected to date along with the weed species that have been identified this year.

With any luck we should be able to pull the report and easily send it to EddMaps West for compliance with the Department of AG request. Deadline for submission is September 30. Tina is planning to send it September 1.

Tina sat in on a webinar that is using “modeling software” to take mapped data and predict where the infestations will move to and estimate cost of control now vs in the future. Tina may try to look more into this over the winter and see what I can get set-up. The potential is very exciting.

One cool thing Washington state did is their weed ID map is on line and people can see the weeds, however, if they get down to a 2 mile view the weed points disappear – to protect private property owners. Tina will keep this in mind if we ever make weed mapping data readily available on the County's website.

A lively discussion ensued on landowners utilizing this data, being able to map and report additional sightings or making the mapped data available to the public to readily see and know. It was quickly pointed out how this new technology and system will make it much easier for Weld County to be in compliance with the State Law requirements for reporting the noxious weed

infestations.

### III Grant Submissions – results

GOCO – waiting to hear: The original deadline for submission was January. Due to the Federal government shutdown issues they extended it to March. Announcements of funding should be made around June 13. For final submission we had to make some tweaks to meet their requirements and involve Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado as a partner. We also adjusted the budget to include all expenses for 3 years – so the budget changed a little bit. If we are awarded, Tina will have to present the changes to the BOCC and see if they are still willing to go forward with the project. The project would cover more seasonal time to treat on the PNG for the next 3 years as well as implement several volunteer projects. If awarded, then the current USFS funds would extend the treatments we are able to make out to a full 5 years covered and Tina wouldn't have to apply for grants to help cover work being done on the PNG.

Department of AG grant for the Weed Division: this grant was awarded in full. We received \$40,000. \$20,000 for PNG treatments and \$20,000 for cost-share on Dalmatian toadflax treatments.

Department of AG grant for the Weld County Youth Conservation Corp: did not submit their grant application on time and did not call ahead to ask for an extension on submission. Tina encouraged them to submit their application in the winter 2019 when it opens again. They potentially lost \$30,000 with this mistake. This grant application was for treating Russian olive trees on the Big Thompson River.

### New Business

#### I UAS (Drone) Status

Tina passed the Remote Pilot, Part 107 test! It was hard. It had a lot of questions on the sectional charts and the radio frequencies to communicate with Air Traffic Control and other pilots.

When asked about purchasing one, Tina indicated that the next step was convincing the BOCC that we won't abuse the use of a UAS (drone) and spy on landowners so that they will purchase a mapping/surveying unit in the 2020 budget.

When asked about the estimated purchase price in the budget request, Tina indicated that she is working on investigating units and deciding on which UAS (unmanned aircraft system) best meets the departments needs while drafting bid documents. Currently the DJI Phantom 4 is about \$1500 and the Inspire is about \$2500. There is one out there specifically for mapping from SenseFly that Tina is also going to check on. The budget may need to be adjusted for this one.

Also, working with the Sheriff department and going to reach out to the Firestone police department and see how they handle their programs. What documentation they use and evaluate using similar units.

Working on developing Standard Operating Procedures so we can move forward once a unit is purchased.

Going to investigate the FAA requirements for spraying from a UAS (as other entities/companies) are already doing and then putting together a grant application for the Department of Ag to buy Weld County a spraying UAS in 2020 to treat List A – mandatory eradication species – growing in unsafe/unreachable locations. Tina gave 2 examples where a UAS would make it safer for staff to treat mandatory eradication species: 1 with Purple Loosestrife for inspection and possible treatment and 1 for Hairy Willow Herb treatment.

Investigating the application process for a Certificate of Waiver (CoW) so we are ready to submit when the time is right. The CoW we would be applying for is to be able to fly over the roads and inspect them without having to close the road to the public. Once submitted, application process takes 90 days to receive notification of acceptance or the request is declined and why. This is being done in Minnesota and other water districts around the United States.

As part of Tina’s “sales pitch”: The “commercial” use of UAS’s is a huge growing sector and isn’t going to slow down. Weld County should be on the cutting edge of this technology and demonstrate how it can safely be used to make doing our jobs safer and better, while still protecting the public and their rights. Commissioner Moreno told her to keep practicing her sales pitch. He is in support of the units and sees how they would be very useful tools.

## II Advisory Board Volunteer Opportunities

June 8 – Northern Water Conservation Gardens Fair – Flyer provided

June 10 – Coal Bank Dam Inspection – Tina explained it’s an annual requirement to inspect.

June 20 – CSU/Colorado Weed Network Field Day – Flyer provided. Ron and Jean said it was a great event and opportunity to see lots of neat new research.

July 24 – Fair – Judging – Tina explained the “Creative Weeds” contest is fresh or dried flower arrangements that include at least 1 noxious weed.

August 12 – 15 – Purple Loosestrife Treatments – Jean shared her stories of all the fun that this event is – just not in a canoe.

Tina offered a ride along option if members wanted a chance to see weeds and how the staff carry out their duties. A couple of possible dates were selected. Tina was instructed to send out an email to ask the members to respond if they wanted to participate and go with majority rules.

Jean volunteered to attend the meeting on June 10<sup>th</sup> and judge at the County Fair.

## III Advisory Board Questions: None

IV Announcements: Confirmed the next meeting is set for November 20<sup>th</sup>.

V Adjourn – meeting adjourned at 8:09 pm.